

**City of Somerville, Massachusetts**  
**Board of Health Meeting Minutes**  
**October 9, 2003**

Present: Dr. David Osler, M.S., Chairman  
Jack Vondras, Director  
Cesar Pungirum, Tobacco Control Program  
Cecilia Sosa-Patterson, Member  
Arnold Duclersaint, Member  
Liz Quaratiello, Public Health Nurse  
Bonnie Carroll, Director of the Community and Family Advocacy Prog.

Meeting called to order at 4:30 p.m.

**ACCEPT MINUTES:**

Motion made to move to accept minutes of September 18, 2003. Seconded. Two verbal affirmative votes, one abstention.

**MASSAGE LICENSE.**

The applicant was trained in Brazil and requires a variance from the Board. All of her paperwork is in order per Harry Vaughn, Senior Sanitary Inspector for the Health Department. Applicant meets all regulation requirements with the exception that she was trained in another country. We are also waiting for a massage establishment application. Because the applicant applied on her own, she can not practice until that is dealt with separately. Specific regulations established three years ago require a certain number of hours of training and mandates background checks. The initial intent was to assure legitimacy. Dr. Osler asked if it was the Director's recommendation the Board approve the variance. Mr. Vondras indicated in the affirmative with the stipulation that the applicant understood that she can not practice until the other application and it's process was completed. Applicant indicated acceptance of stipulation. A motion to approve the variance was made, then seconded, then passed by unanimous decision.

**CLEAN AIR WORKS:**

Cesar updated the Board on his 10/01/03 visits. The sample of bars visited with police escorts in Somerville were all in compliance. There weren't many people smoking outside. In Cambridge, also with police escorts, there was one minor violation. Cesar will finish visiting all establishments in both cities by the end of this month. He will resume compliance checks in November.

The Revere Board of Health wants to move fast on Clean Air Works. They meet on October 22<sup>nd</sup> and will have a hearing within one or two months. It is unknown as to why they have decided to fast track this. Cesar will find out more during their meeting on the 22nd. The Everett Board of Health has already had one public hearing and the vote is scheduled for November 18. They have a three-member board. The new board member, a smoker, replaced the member who was against the ban. Dr. Osler asked if there was a

physician on that board and Cesar indicated in the affirmative. Mr. Vondras said they need two of three votes. Chelsea is going well. Cesar's goal is to revisit all establishments before this month ends. An accurate article on the smoking ban appeared in the Chelsea Record. There is no litter on sidewalks.

In the Somerville Journal article today, the reporter took the smoker's angle, and used pictures of smokers who were outside smoking. The article quoted Mr. Pungirum accurately, and it is going well. The business community concerns are not true as of yet.

Cambridge is also going well. We received only two smoking complaints in Cambridge, but there was no evidence of non-compliance. Cesar follows up on all violation calls, which prove untrue.

The Somerville Board of Health is moving to include private clubs in the smoking ban. Mr. Pungirum will have amendment language prepared to vote on at the next Board meeting. Conducting an appropriate process was discussed. For example, private clubs in Cambridge and were not part of the process, but were included in the regulations before passage. Private clubs have not been part of the process in Somerville either. The Board should discuss whether we intend to notify them that we may change regulations.

The Director has been invited to the Alderman meeting on October 23<sup>rd</sup> to discuss Clean Air Works and Mr. Pungirum will accompany him. This is a result of a Board order from Alderman Roche in Ward 1, as private clubs have asked him questions he couldn't answer. The Director hasn't spoken to the Mayor on this. Our commitment was that we would have a process that is more defined for private clubs. The Director is concerned about fast tracking privates without informing them. In Cambridge, the clubs are furious because they were not part of the process. We want to avoid alienating the private clubs in Somerville.

Cecilia suggested notifying private clubs as the Legal Department is drafting language. Arnold thinks we should have a hearing with private clubs. The Director believes this will take more time, but it honors the process. Cecilia suggested creation of an informational package for private clubs regarding the history of and reasons for implementation. The goal is to make the private clubs part of the implementation process because eventually they will be regulated. Dr. Osler suggested the Board members keep an open mind. Cesar indicated that timing is critical if the intent is to vote next meeting. Jack is meeting with the Mayor on Wednesday. Arnold suggested the Board should get the process going, but to vote on adoption after the Mayoral election.

Dr. Osler said it will take longer than two months to get it done. The Director reiterated the importance of a proper process and suggested inviting privates to talk with the Board. There are approximately eighteen to twenty clubs in Somerville in opposition to this. Dr. Osler asked what the next step was. Cesar mentioned notifying privates that the BOH is thinking about including private clubs in the smoking ban, and then having a meeting. Cesar believes the Board can amend without having a hearing and he will follow up with

the Director on this issue. Jack will inform the Board of the procedure for amendment. Dr. Osler wants the first step to be confirming the process to amend the regulation.

It was decided that private clubs could be invited to our next meeting, which is November 13th. We will invite them to a regular meeting in lieu of having a special hearing. The next Mayor officially sits January 5. Cesar will invite private clubs to an open meeting so the Board will get a sense next time of the atmosphere.

The signature process is unresolved. Regulations were signed by Dr. Osler and Arnold, but Cecilia hasn't signed yet. It should be clear who voted and on what. The Director indicated we have legal authority with 2 of 3 signatures, a majority approved. Mr. Pungirum plans on making minor changes in the regulations to improve enforcement. For example, there is no requirement for "no smoking" signs and posting such signs should be required.

Cecilia, shared information about the Youth Program at the Community Action Agency. She distributed a "quit smoking" flyer to the Board, one side of which was in Spanish, the other English. The youth advertised in Sullivan, Harvard, Central & Davis Squares and distributed close to 2000 flyers on quitting smoking. This was a good experience for youth they did great work.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

None.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

Liz Quaratiello, the Public Health Nurse who started three weeks ago and Bonnie Carroll, who represents what is left of the Human Services Department and who joined Health Department as of July 1 with the re-organization, were both introduced.

We've had requests from Aldermen and others about boarding multiple animals and whether or not we have an ordinance on this. We have documentation from other cities that Genita Johnson gathered a few years ago, that we could look at as a model for our city.

Regulating nail salons has also come up. Harry Vaughn is concern is around staffing. We have about twenty nail salons and only two sanitation inspectors. A number of cities including Chelsea regulate nail salons, and we could use their regulations as a model for our jurisdiction. All that is currently required for a nail salon to operate is a certificate of occupancy.

Cecilia suggested that the Health Department begin looking at other cities for nail regulations, but with staffing as an issue, we should finish our work with tobacco first and then focus on nails.

Public Health Nurse:

Liz was a former newspaper reporter, and worked for Head Start for 5 yrs. She was a substitute nurse in the Somerville schools last year. She is a Somerville resident and enjoys the job. Her first task is running flu clinics. There is no clinic at the Annex this year because the building is not handicapped accessible. The large clinics are at Somerville Hospital, the Council on Aging and City Hall. People in shelters, police, firefighters, and health workers will also be vaccinated. Dr. Osler said there seemed to be enough vaccine to go around, but Liz said the state only gave her 1000 doses and she wrote a letter asking for an additional 10%. If there is a need, she thinks they could get 100 extra doses. Dr. Osler said current levels seem close to what we had last year. Jack mentioned last year's residency requirement. This year, for the first time, we will submit reimbursement requests to Medicare and HMO's, which will cause some extra work. Liz and Linda will be doing the billing.

Departmental title:

We've had mergers and we now oversee Human Services. A title of Health and Human Services is problematic because there is no Human Services per se, there is Bonnie and a ½ time person Christie Mace who runs the Women's Commission. There may be an assumption of services, as there used to be 8-9 people in the Human Services Department.

If a call comes in at x2500 Bonnie determines where the caller's needs are best served, and provides necessary information to callers. She directs people to agencies to get the services they require. The Director mentioned the existence of a number of agencies in Somerville that provide services. Cambridge still provides many of those services within their structure. In Somerville we do not and we are criticized as a result. We are coordinating our efforts with Human Services to grant write.

Bonnie's budget falls under the Health Department umbrella. Funds are received from the Community Development Block Grant to support the budget. Christie is U.D.A.G. and her funding is more vulnerable. We are investigating for alternative sources of funding for Christie sooner than for Bonnie. There are no Ordinary Maintenance funds budgeted for Human Services.

Dr. Osler asked if there is any reason to change what we are doing regarding service provision. The Director mentioned receiving inquiries about a name change to Health and Human services. Stationery orders are on hold because of the new Mayor issue, and we wanted the Board's advice on a departmental title. The department regulates as a result of statute, performing housing inspections, quarantines, and provides people with access to medical services among others. This title issue is different: it is human services. There are number of cities that have Health & Human Services element, but in Somerville we do not.

Dr. Osler mentioned that the regulations mention a health function. The Director suggested that if we call it Health and Human Services we might open ourselves up regarding scope of services. Cecilia suggested that a name change might give residents and Aldermen unrealistic expectations regarding scope of services. We assume that

Bonnie's scope may evolve. Christie currently handles domestic violence, and the Women's Commission as primary tasks.

Dr. Osler suggested that not every hospital does heart transplants, yet we do provide some human services. As it is a more credible name, and if it didn't change any jobs, would increased grant funding result from the name change? Health and Human Services sounds like a better or broader title. Jack mentioned that the Women's Commission actually has a commission.

Dr. Osler asked the procedure for changing the title. The Director suggested the BOH make a recommendation to the Mayor's office.

Arnold likes Health and Human Services and suggested that if Bonnie is already doing the work and it doesn't affect Jack's job and his staff, the title should change. Cecilia asked if this created opportunities for more funding. Jack indicated we are not competing for other services, homelessness for example, but we would be over arching coordination. Arnold said we are already doing that now and we need to inform the community about services location. The Director mentioned that in addition to providing services, we also provide policy. Dr. Osler wants to know the process for a departmental name change.

The Board decided not to make a decision on the name change during this meeting. The Director will speak to the mayor about it. The new mayor may want to separate the departments. Cecilia doesn't want the department to be overworked and asked if there was a possibility of coordinating something with other offices or agencies that do this work in order to get a human services edge. She also doesn't want to give more work to the department given the budget crisis and understaffing issues. The issue is something we should keep in mind. Jack will do homework and we will revisit this topic.

Future goals:

Cecilia suggested that the Board link more with the community. She'd like to have representatives from agencies meet with us on housing, among other things, to let us know what's happening in the neighborhoods. The Board could also find out what's going on with these agencies. The goal is getting to know people in the community and/or specific groups. These groups can explain their needs, and in return the Board will have them as resource, enabling a communication link for regulatory issues. Dr. Osler suggested meeting with one group at time. Cecilia suggested inviting key community leaders, for example someone from the Haitian Coalition, an group that works with youth, elders, and the Haitian community. A representative could come and tells us about their community. The same could happen with the Latino community and the Brazilian community. Let's connect with the three largest groups though there are others. Cecilia will do more homework and report back.

Dr. Osler suggested meeting with one group per meeting. The Director said there are six agencies that focus on these three groups. Cecilia suggested giving each group ten minutes. Arnold thought this was an excellent idea. The Board will identify those

groups who provide services in community and instead of having topic driven discussions, they will be population driven. So for next few meetings we may have a few groups come.

Grant sources:

The Health Department currently has guaranteed funding of \$659,983.96.

Executive Session:

Date for Next meeting: Nov. 13, 2003

Meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Yours truly,

Linda Dubuque